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Committee on Information

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Agenda item 9

Consideration and adoption of the report of the Committee
to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session

Draft report

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I. Introduction

1. At its thirty-fourth session, the General Assembly decided to maintain the Committee to Review United Nations Public Information Policies and Activities, established under Assembly resolution 33/115 C of 18 December 1978, which would be known as the Committee on Information, and to increase its membership from 41 to 66. In section I, paragraph 2, of its resolution 34/182 of 18 December 1979, the Assembly requested the Committee on Information:

“(a) To continue to examine United Nations public information policies and activities, in the light of the evolution of international relations, particularly during the past two decades, and of the imperatives of the establishment of the new international economic order and of a new world information and communication order;

“(b) To evaluate and follow up the efforts made and the progress achieved by the United Nations system in the field of information and communications;

“(c) To promote the establishment of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order intended to strengthen peace and international understanding and based on the free circulation and wider and better balanced dissemination of information and to make recommendations thereon to the General Assembly”;

and requested the Committee on Information and the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its thirty-fifth session.

2. At its thirty-fifth session, the General Assembly, in its resolution 35/201 of 16 December 1980, expressed its satisfaction with the work of the Committee on Information, approved the report of the Committee and the recommendations of its Ad Hoc Working Group,¹ reaffirmed the mandate given to the Committee in Assembly resolution 34/182 and decided to increase the membership of the Committee from 66 to 67. The Committee on Information agreed, at its organizational session in 1980, that the principle of geographical rotation would be applied to all the officers of the Committee and that they should be elected for two-year terms of office.

3. At its thirty-sixth to fifty-first sessions (see resolutions 36/149 B, 37/94 B, 38/82 B, 39/98 A, 40/164 A, 41/68 A, 42/162 A and B, 43/60 A and B, 44/50, 45/76 A and B, 46/73 B, 47/73 B, 48/44 B, 49/38 B, 50/31 B and 51/138 B), the General Assembly again expressed its satisfaction with the work of the Committee on Information, approved the reports of the Committee² and its recommendations and reaffirmed the mandate given to the Committee in its resolution 34/182. At its fifty-second session, the Assembly took note of the report of the Committee³ and adopted consensus resolutions 52/70 A and B of 10 December 1997. At its fifty-third session, the Assembly took note of the report of the Committee⁴ and adopted consensus resolutions 53/59 A and B of 3 December 1998. At its fifty-fourth session, the Assembly took note of the report of the Committee⁵ and adopted consensus resolutions 54/82 A and B of 6 December 1999. At its fifty-fifth session, the Assembly took note of the report of the Committee⁶ and adopted consensus resolutions 55/136 A and B of 8 December 2000. At its fifty-sixth session, the

Assembly took note of the report of the Committee and adopted consensus resolutions 56/64 A of 10 December 2001 and B of 24 December 2001.

4. At its thirty-ninth session, the General Assembly appointed two new members of the Committee, namely China and Mexico; at its forty-first session, the Assembly appointed Malta as a new member of the Committee; at its forty-third session, the Assembly appointed Hungary, Ireland and Zimbabwe as new members of the Committee; and at its forty-fourth session, the Assembly appointed Nepal as a new member.

5. At its forty-fifth session, the General Assembly decided, on the recommendation of the Committee on Information, to increase the membership of the Committee from 74 to 78, and appointed Czechoslovakia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jamaica and Uruguay as members. The Assembly also decided to appoint the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic as a member of the Committee, with immediate effect, to fill the vacancy left by the German Democratic Republic.

6. At its forty-sixth session, the General Assembly decided, on the recommendation of the Special Political Committee, to increase the membership of the Committee from 78 to 79, and appointed Burkina Faso as a member.

7. At its forty-seventh session, the General Assembly decided, on the recommendation of the Special Political Committee, to increase the membership of the Committee on Information from 79 to 81, and appointed the Republic of Korea and Senegal as members.

8. At its forty-eighth session, the General Assembly decided, on the recommendation of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), to increase the membership of the Committee on Information from 81 to 83, and appointed Gabon and Israel as members.

9. At its forty-ninth session, the General Assembly decided, on the recommendation of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), to increase the membership of the Committee on Information from 83 to 88, and appointed Belize, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Kazakhstan and South Africa as members.

10. At its fiftieth session, the General Assembly decided, on the recommendation of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), to increase the membership of the Committee on Information from 88 to 89, and appointed the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a member.

11. At its fifty-second session, the General Assembly decided, on the recommendation of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), to increase the membership of the Committee on Information from 89 to 90, and appointed Georgia as a member.

12. At its fifty-third session, the General Assembly decided, on the recommendation of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), to increase the membership of the Committee on Information from 90 to 93, and appointed Angola, the Republic of Moldova and Solomon Islands as members.

13. At its fifty-fourth session, the General Assembly decided, on the recommendation of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth

Committee), to increase the membership of the Committee on Information from 93 to 95, and appointed Liberia and Mozambique as members of the Committee.

14. At its fifty-fifth session, the General Assembly decided, on the recommendation of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), to increase the membership of the Committee on Information from 95 to 97, and appointed Armenia and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya as members of the Committee. Furthermore, the admission of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to membership in the United Nations, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 55/12 of 1 November 2000, terminated the membership of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in all organs and subsidiary organs of the United Nations, including the Committee on Information. At its fifty-sixth session, the General Assembly decided on the recommendation of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee to increase the membership of the Committee on Information from 96 to 98 and appointed Azerbaijan and Monaco as members.

15. The Committee is composed of the following Member States:

Algeria	France	Pakistan
Angola	Gabon	Peru
Argentina	Georgia	Philippines
Armenia	Germany	Poland
Azerbaijan	Ghana	Portugal
Bangladesh	Greece	Republic of Korea
Belarus	Guatemala	Republic of Moldova
Belgium	Guinea	Romania
Belize	Guyana	Russian Federation
Benin	Hungary	Senegal
Brazil	India	Singapore
Bulgaria	Indonesia	Slovakia
Burkina Faso	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Solomon Islands
Burundi	Ireland	Somalia
Chile	Israel	South Africa
China	Italy	Spain
Colombia	Jamaica	Sri Lanka
Congo	Japan	Sudan
Costa Rica	Jordan	Syrian Arab Republic
Côte d'Ivoire	Kazakhstan	Togo
Croatia	Kenya	Trinidad and Tobago
Cuba	Lebanon	Tunisia
Cyprus	Liberia	Turkey
Czech Republic	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Ukraine
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Malta	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Mexico	United Republic of Tanzania
Denmark	Monaco	United States of America
Ecuador	Mongolia	Uruguay
Egypt	Morocco	Venezuela
El Salvador	Mozambique	Viet Nam
Ethiopia	Nepal	Yemen
Finland	Netherlands	Zimbabwe
	Niger	
	Nigeria	

II. Organizational questions

A. Opening of the session

16. The organizational meeting of the twenty-fourth session of the Committee on Information was held on 22 April 2002 at United Nations Headquarters. The session was opened by the Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Milos Alcalay (Venezuela).

B. Officers

17. The officers of the Committee on Information for the period 2001-2002 are as follows:

Chairman:

Milos Alcalay (Venezuela)

Vice-Chairmen:

Ivan Matchavariani (Georgia)

Tserenpil Dorjsuren (Mongolia)

Peter Mollema (Netherlands)

Rapporteur:

Walid A. Haggag (Egypt)

C. Adoption of the agenda and programme of work

18. At its organizational meeting, the Committee adopted the following agenda and programme of work (A/AC.198/2002/1/Rev.1):

1. Opening of the session.
2. Adoption of the agenda and programme of work.
3. Statement by the Chairman.
4. Statement by the Interim Head, Department of Public Information.
5. General debate.
6. Consideration of reports submitted by the Secretary-General.
7. Open-ended working group of the Committee on Information.
8. Commemoration of World Press Freedom Day.
9. Consideration and adoption of the report of the Committee to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session.

19. The Committee held the substantive meetings of its twenty-fourth session at United Nations Headquarters from 22 April to 2 May 2002.

20. For its consideration of agenda item 6, the Committee had before it the reports of the Secretary-General on:

- (a) Reorientation of United Nations activities in the field of public information and communications (A/AC.198/2002/2);

- (b) United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations (2001) (A/AC.198/2002/3);
- (c) Integration of United Nations information centres with field offices of the United Nations Development Programme: continued implementation of the views of host Governments (A/AC.198/2002/4);
- (d) Substantive questions: role of the Department of Public Information in United Nations peacekeeping (A/AC.198/2002/5);
- (e) Continued development, maintenance and enrichment of the United Nations web site in the six official languages (A/AC.198/2002/6);
- (f) Activities of the Joint United Nations Information Committee in 2001 (A/AC.198/2002/7).

D. Observers

21. The following Member States took part in the session as observers: Antigua and Barbuda, Austria, Central African Republic, Estonia, Iraq, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Sweden and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The Holy See also participated as an observer.

22. Representatives of the following specialized agencies also participated as observers: the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Intellectual Property Organization. The World Association of Former United Nations Interns and Fellows, Inc. and the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie also participated as observers.

E. Commemoration of World Press Freedom Day

23. On 2 May, the Committee observed World Press Freedom Day 2002 with an event on media and international terrorism, organized by the Department of Public Information. The Deputy Secretary-General opened the meeting, which was also addressed by the Chairman of the Committee on Information, the Director, Bureau of Public Information, UNESCO, and the Chairman of the World Press Freedom Committee. A number of distinguished print and broadcast journalists took part in a panel discussion on the theme "Covering the War on Global Terror", which also featured a videotaped interview with Mrs. Mariane Pearl, widow of *Wall Street Journal* reporter, Daniel Pearl. Free press issues that had arisen or taken on special significance in the aftermath of recent terrorist activities, such as national and international security vs. freedom of the press, televised coverage of terrorism trials, and safety of journalists were addressed. The event was moderated by the Interim Head of the Department of Public Information.

Notes

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/35/21), annex, sect. V.*

² *Ibid.*, *Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/36/21)*; *ibid.*, *Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 21* and corrigendum (A/37/21 and Corr.1); *ibid.*, *Thirty-eighth Session,*

Supplemen: No. 21 and corrigenda (A/38/21 and Corr.1 and 2); ibid., Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/39/21); ibid., Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/40/21); ibid., Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/41/21); ibid., Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/42/21); ibid., Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/43/21); ibid., Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/44/21); ibid., Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/45/21); ibid., Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/46/21); ibid., Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/47/21); ibid., Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/48/21); ibid., Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/49/21); ibid., Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/50/21); and ibid., Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/51/21).

³ *Ibid., Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/52/21/Rev.1).*

⁴ *Ibid., Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/53/21/Rev.1).*

⁵ *Ibid., Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 21 and addendum (A/54/21/Rev.1).*

⁶ *Ibid., Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/55/21).*